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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY AUGUST 24, 2004

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for August 24, 2004. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

#### POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

ULKEDE OZGUR GUNDEM: Two mass-graves, where PKK militants had been buried, were discovered in Tatvan, Bitlis province. Skulls, "Mekap"-brand shoes used by PKK militants, and military uniforms were found in the graves dating from 1994. 13 PKK militants were found in a grave in the Kender Mountains, and 19 others in a grave in the Bindaki Mountains. Three villagers anonymously said the militants buried in the Kender Mountains were arrested by soldiers, and were shot execution-style with their hands behind their backs.

ZAMAN, SAABH, CUMHURIYET, MILLIYET, HURRIYET, TERCUMAN, RADIKAL, EVRENSEL, ULKEDE OZGUR GUNDEM: Approximately 400 villagers from the Sinan village of Bismil township, Diyarbakir province, undertook a demonstration against the landlord "agha," who they claimed had taken their land by fraud. Currently the villagers are working as share-croppers for the Istanbul resident agha, Cengiz Sinanli, who said his family inherited approximately 13,750 acres in Sinan village about 100 years ago. Sinanli said he was charging villagers a nominal fee for cultivating the land. Villagers, who were displaying Turkish flags, carried banners stating "We do not want the agha system" and "The land belongs to us, and will belong to us." The Jandarma watched the demonstrators from distance without intervening.

CUMHURIYET: The Kurdish Language School in Diyarbakir was opened yesterday. The Diyarbakir National Education Directorate (DNED) warned the school authorities that its sign resembled PKK-Kongra Gel's colors. In addition to the school's sign, which was written with yellow letters on a black background, a yellow, green, and red-colored sign was also hung in the building. The DNED officials warned the school administration that the second sign they had hung was in opposition to the regulations, but the school administration responded that they had put it up for advertisement purposes, and would not take it down because it was not against any laws. The Diyarbakir Mayor Osman Baydemir, the Batman Mayor Huseyin Kalkan, and various other mayors attended the opening ceremony.

ULKEDE OZGUR GUNDEM: In Cizre, Sirnak province, a group of 300 DEHAP members gathered in DEHAP's district office. Later, five persons from the crowd delivered 5,540 petitions to the Cizre Sub-governor's office advocating "freedom for Ocalan" and an end to the ongoing military operations in the region. In Mazidag, Mardin province, a similar action was undertaken. Two persons delivered 342 petitions with the same content to the Mazidagi Sub-governor's office.

ULKEDE OZGUR GUNDEM: Kurdistan Ozgurluk Sahinleri (TAK-Teyrabazen Azadiya Kurdistan - Hawks for Freedom of Kurdistan) took responsibility for the August 20 attack at the Organized Industrial Zone in Ikitelli of Istanbul; the August 17 attack at a beach in Bodrum; and the August 8 and July 29 attacks in Mersin. TAK stated that it would mount its attacks against Turkey unless it gave up its false policies toward the Kurdish issue. TAK also warned tourists vacationing in Turkey to return their homes because they were providing financial resources to the Turkish Government.

ULKEDE OZGUR GUNDEM: In Adana, Meral Turkmen, a former employee of the Akdeniz Kultur Merkezi, claimed that she was kidnapped by four unidentified persons on August 14. She said that four persons forced her to ride in a Mercedes vehicle, and that they folded her hands and eyes and taped her mouth. She claimed that the kidnappers constantly told her that her father was a terrorist, and that he was recruiting for the PKK. She said that they forced her to accept becoming an informer for them because they said she was familiar with all the Kurdish institutions.

ULKEDE OZGUR GUNDEM: In Batman, five persons who were detained on August 20 while driving from Diyarbakir to Batman, were imprisoned on the charges of "recruiting for the organization, and undertaking actions on behalf of the organization." [Note: the "organization" was not specified in the article. End note.] Separately, working on a tip, police from the Batman Anti-Terror Department arrested two persons. The court ordered the suspects to be imprisoned for being members of an outlawed organization.

HURRIYET: GOT forces launched an intensive operation against the PKK-Kongra Gel militants in rural Sirnak. Village guards have been deployed on the dominant hills and in Misiri, Tames, Akarsu, and Kumcati routes, which militants use for infiltrating into Turkey from Iraq. The GOT operation, which started four days ago in the Cudi and Gabbar Mountains, has been shifted to the Besta region. 5,000 soldiers have been participating in the operation, and Armored Personnel Carriers (APC) are constantly patrolling in the area.

BOLGE, TURKIYE: Working on a tip, the Mersin Anti-smuggling and Organized Crimes police seized 12 tons of cigarettes smuggled from Cyprus. Five persons having connections with the matter were detained.

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